

Statement

Matthew C. Knight
1st Vice-President, Alabama Assoc. of Rescue Squads

House Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight

“First Responder Training a Must”

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for your time and the opportunity to appear before you to represent the Association for first responder training.

As a current instructor and volunteer member I have experienced many First Responder's receiving training from various agencies through the support that Homeland Security has provided. This continued support will only make more educational opportunities available to the various First Responders across Alabama as well as the nation.

To validate part of the training, the Alabama Assoc. of Rescue Squads has partnered with the Alabama Fire College to offer certain courses that were not available previously to many of the volunteers in our association. These courses have objectives and outcomes that really hold the quality and integrity of the course to quality standards. With this partnership and availability of funding this would allow instructors to travel to the various

regions across the state and allow hundreds of our members receive the desired training.

The funding from previous years has provided excellent opportunities for those who have received training at this great facility. However there are many more wanting and seeking that desire to receive the training this facility provides. I being one of those, the most recent career change has not allowed me to participate in the various offerings.

Communications is so critical during any disaster. With federal funding and/or grants that has been provided it has allowed for the bridge and back bone foundation to be laid. With the continued funding now we can look at interoperability among state, regional, and local entities.

However I must point out that unlike the Fire Departments, the Rescue Squads in there mission of First Responder duties have missed out on much of the available grants provided. So I must ask to please consider allowing Rescue Squads to submit applications for grants to carry out their missions.

These individuals go above and beyond the call of duty to aid in any endeavor only to be denied the proper equipment to function at times.

Once again thank you for allowing me this opportunity to represent the Association on this important hearing. I will be glad to answer any questions you might have.